UNIT-12

ATTITUDES, VALUE & INTEREST

Syllabus Mains:- Definitions of attitudes, values and interests. Components of attitudes; Formation and maintenance of attitudes. Measurement of attitudes, value and interest. Theories of attitude change; strategies for fostering values.Formation of stereotypes and prejudices; changing others behavior;Theories of attribution; Recent trends.

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An **attitude** is a learned and relatively enduring tendency or predisposition to evaluate a person, event, or situation in a certain way and to act in accordance with that evaluation. It constitutes, then, a social orientation-an underlying inclination to respond to something either favorably or unfavorably. As such, an attitude is a state of mind. Consequently, if we wish to influence other people's behavior, one way to go about it is to influence their state of mind. We may seek to win their support for programs of social change, to persuade them to favor the political candidates of our choice, to prefer our taste in television programs, to stop polluting the water, to quite smoking, or to donate money to our favored cause. And others likewise attempt to persuade us to adopt their views. Given the importance of some of these matters, it is hardly surprising that the process by which people go about forming, maintaining, and changing attitudes has attracted considerable research interest. In the past two decades more than 1,600 articles treating some aspect of the process have appeared in professional journals.

--------COMPONENTS OF ATTITUDES

Social psychologists distinguish three components of an attitude-the cognitive, the affective, and the behavioral. The **cognitive component** is the we perceive an objects, event, or situation-our thoughts, beliefs, and ideas about something. In its simplest form the cognitive element is a category that we employ in thinking. Thus the category car includes station wagons, convertibles, Jaguars, Hondas, Cadillacs, and so on. Statement of the form "cars are this or that" and "cars have this or that" express ideas that are a part of this component.

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When a human being is the object of the attitude, the cognitive component is frequently a stereotype-the mental picture we have of a particular people. Walter Lippmann, to whom we owe the term **stereotype**, observed that since the world is filled with "so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations…..we have to construct it on a simpler model before we can manage with it". In brief, we find it virtually impossible to weigh every reaction of every person we encounter, minute-by-minute, in terms of its particular, individual meaning. Rather, we type individuals and groups in snap-judgment style: the "fighting Irish," the "Inscrutable Orientals," the "Stolid Swedes", the "grasping Jews", and the "Emotional Italians". Although stereotypes are convenient, they lack the important virtue of accuracy. They are the unscientific and hence unreliable generalizations that we make about people either as individuals or as groups.

The **affective component** of an attitude consists of the feelings or emotions that the actual objects, event, or situation or its symbolic representation evoke within an individual. Fear, sympathy, pity, bate, anger, envy, love, and contempt are among the emotions that may be excited by a given individual or group. The ideas of using the same washroom as someone of another race, of drinking from glasses handled by, or of shaking hands with, a Black, Jew, White, or Chinese produce disgust or discomfort in some individuals. The prospect of having Blacks move into an all-White neighborhood may arouse fear and anxiety among some White. The social standing of Businessmen or doctors may elicit envy some Gentles. Although the emotional level is distinct from the cognitive, the two may appear together.

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The **behavioral component** of an attitude is the tendency or disposition of act in certain ways with reference to some object, event, or situations. The emphasis falls upon the tendency to act, not upon the action itself. Some people may favor barring given groups from their social clubs, athletic associations, neighborhoods, and business and professional organizations-that is, they may be disposed toward discriminatory behavior. But as we shall shortly see, simply because people would like to act in certain ways does not necessarily mean that they in fact do act in these ways; they may fail to translate their inclinations into overt action. For example, some prejudiced individuals, recognizing the legal penalties attached to discriminations, may not in fact discriminate.

---------THE FUNCTIONS OF ATTITUDES

All human beings harvor a wide variety of need. Some needs are primarily biological (such as hunger, thirst, and the needs for sex and sleep); other are social (the needs or status, recognition, privilege, power).

Daniel Katz has advanced a functionalist theory of attitudes that is premised upon this fact. He takes that view that our attitudes are determined by the functions they serve for us. In brief, people hold given attitudes because these attitudes help them achieve their basic goals. Katz distinguishes four types of psychological functions that attitudes meet:

- **The adjustment function**: Human beings typically seek to maximize rewards and minimize penalties. According to Katz, people develop attitudes that aid them in accomplishing this goal. We tend to favor a political party or candidate that will advance our economic lot-if we are businessperson, one that will hold the line on or lower corporate taxes; if we are unemployed, one that will increase unemployment and social welfare benefits. And we are likely to seek as a lover someone who provides us with a variety or rewards-a sense of self-worthy, recognition, security, and so on-while avoiding someone who produces the opposite effect.

- **The ego-defense function**: Some attitudes serve to protect us from acknowledging basic truths about ourselves or the harsh realities of life. They serve as defense mechanisms, shielding us from inner pain. Projection is such a device: we attribute to others traits that we find unacceptable in ourselves, and in so doing; we dissociate ourselves from the traits. To the alcoholic it may be the other fellow who overindulges; to the failing student it may be the teacher who is incompetent, to the hostile and aggressive child it may be the other child who started the fight.

- **The value-expressive function**: While ego-defensive attitudes prevent us from revealing unpleasant realities to ourselves, other attitudes help give positive expression to our central value and to the type of person we imaging ourselves to be. Such attitudes reinforce a sense of self-realization and self-expression. We may have a self-image of our-self as an “enlightened conservative” or a “militant radical” and therefore cultivate attitudes that we believe indicate such a core value, or we may see our-self as a “swinger” or “someone really with it” and hence cultivate attitudes that reinforce this perspective.

- **The knowledge function**: In life we seek some degree of order, clarity and stability in our personal frame of reference; we search for meaning in and understanding of the

events that impinge upon us. Attitudes help supply us with standards of evaluation. It provides us with order and clarity with respect to the great and bewildering complexities of life that are due to human differences.

Katz's functionalist theory also helps to explain attitude change:

The most general statement that can be made about the conditions conductive to attitude change is that the expression of the old attitude or its anticipated expression no longer gives satisfaction to its related need state. In other words, it no longer serves its function and the individual feels blocked or frustrated. Modifying an old attitude or replacing it with a new one is a process of learning, and learning always starts with a problem, or being thwarted in coping with a situation.

A case in point is an adjustment need. A Honda owner who undergoes a change to a higher social status may also undergo a change of attitude toward his old car. He may decide that he now wants a Mercedes, because he believes a Mercedes to be more in keeping with his new social status. Thus attitude change is achieved not so much by changing a person's information about or perception of an object, but rather by changing the person's underlying motivational and personality needs.

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Formation of Attitudes

As mentioned earlier, we are not born with attitudes. A newborn baby has no attitude towards a snake. If not stopped by elders, It will have no problem in playing with a snake. Only when it grows little older than a child it learns to fear and avoid a snake. We can also ask a question, 'how do people acquire an attitude toward the Chinese food"? Can we acquire an attitude about something we are not exposed to? Why do people have different attitudes? The term attitude formation refers to the movement we make from having no attitude toward an attitude object to having a positive or negative attitude. Lets examine what factors contribute to the formation of attitudes.

The attitudes are acquired through different types of learning. You have already studied about the basic processes of learning in Class XI. Therefore, the relevance of learning process in relation to attitude formation is only briefly indicated. The three basic learning procedures involved in the acquisition of attitudes are as follows:

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING: AS YOU KNOW THIS KIND OF LEARNING SHOWS HOW A NEUTRAL OBJECT GETS ASSOCIATED WITH AN ALREADY ESTABLISHED STIMULUS – RESPONSE CONNECTION. ANY ATTITUDE OBJECT, WHICH IS REPEATEDLY ASSOCIATED WITH A STIMULI CAPABLE OF EVOKING POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE FEELING, WILL ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO EVOKE A SIMILAR RESPONSE. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU MAY DEVELOP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT A PERSON WHO HAS PRESENT WHENEVER YOU WON A MATCH. PLAYERS OFTEN DEVELOP A STRONG LIKING FOR THE BAT BY WHICH THEY MADE GOOD RUNS.

Instrumental conditioning: It applies to the situations when people learn attitudes which are systematically rewarded by significant others, such as parent, teachers or friends. In fact, children are taught certain attitudes and behaviors by controlling reward and punishment and systematically reinforcing certain kinds of attitudes. While the specific form of such rewards may vary greatly, ranging from praise, affection, approval to offering monetary rewards, jobs and positions. It has been observed that people quickly come to express specific point of views when they are rewarded for their expression.

Observational learning: It suggests that human beings are capable of acquiring new responses simply by observing the actions and their outcomes. Children are keen observers and learn a whole lot of things from their parents and other family members. They learn many of their attitudes about other ethnic groups, neighbours, and ideologies simply by observing the behaviors of adults.

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Factors Influencing Formation of Attitudes

The formation of attitude takes place in our social environment. The different aspects of environment shape the development of attitudes. Some of the important aspects of environment, relevant to the formation of attitudes are described below.

Family: Parents have an all – encompassing influence on the way their children come to form attitudes. Children get their first exposure to the social world through their parents and other family members. They acquire initial knowledge about the people and places from their parents and very often imbibe their values and observation. The young children learn by observing and imitating their elders in the family. Parents provide categories, which their children pick up to form attitudes. Children often learn to categories supplied by their parents. They form attitudes about other social and religious groups on the basis of such categories defined by their parents. Thus, families constitute the primary source of information for children. Imagine how much young children learn about the world from the stories told by their grand parents!

Reference Groups: As the children grow older the diversity of influences on their lives increases. They form opinion about many more people and objects. They come in contact with teachers, policemen, vendors, and more importantly with peers. These groups constitute the reference groups for children. The children learn a great deal from these reference groups. They imbibe attitudes about occupations, social and religious groups, consumer products, national leaders, etc., which are endorsed by such references groups. If their reference group is biased about some religious group, probability is high that the child will also show similar kind of bias.

Direct Personal Experience: How do you form an attitude about an army personnel? It largely depends on your personal encounter with such a man in the past. If he was very kind and helpful to you, you tend to have a favourable attitude towards the army men. If an army man for trespassing has roughed you up, your attitude may not be favourable toward all army men. We tend to generalize.

Apart from day – day – day life experiences, there are other unique significant life events and situations. Meeting Ramkrishna Paramhans changed Narendra and his whole attitudes toward life and people. From a skeptic, he became a believer and went on to address the World Religions' Congress and became a legend as Swami Vivekanand. We all have such turning points, which significantly shape our attitudes in a particular direction. It is understandable that those who are born in extreme poverty conditions and have had many bitter experiences, their attitudes about others are not likely to be positive. The victims of criminal assault and social discrimination can hardly be positive in their judgment of the groups to which the perpetrators belong.

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Media Exposure: Today' s life media has assumed a prominent place. Think how many hours you and yours friends watch the T.V. On an average, urban middle school children watch T.V. for at least 4 – 5 hours and this exposure has become a potent way to learn about the world T.V. commercial tell us which products we should buy. Since children are more impressionable, they tend to believe what they see on the T.V. screen. They rarely question what they see on T.V. Several studies have reported that high – school children rate the mass media as their most important source of information.

Maintenance of Attitudes

Once formed, attitudes persist. The social environment including people, the pattern of interaction, and the distribution of reward and punishment, remains stable to a large extent. They help to maintain attitudes. People like to have consistency in their attitudes and they do this in many ways.

Motivational bias : We discount the contradictory information. If they are confronted with information, which is against their present attitude, they either consider that information as not very relevant or important, or believe that it is coming from a dubious source. One can thus ignore such information.

Rewards and Punishment: Our reference group may be exerting influence to maintain the attitude, which is important for the smooth functioning of the group. The reference group resists any change the people succumb to the group pressure. If the membership of the reference group is important to the person, he or she is more likely to retain his / her former attitude even in the face of contradictory information.

Maintaining a particular attitude may be beneficial for the person. For instance, if someone is very helpful to you in achieving your goals, even if you come to know about his negative qualities you justify his actions and maintain your existing attitude.

Once we make a public commitment, or take a position, it becomes very difficult to change that. For example, if someone has participated in a protest march against the reservation policy, it will be very difficult to take a favourable position about it. If one changes one's attitude in such a situation, he or she may find it difficulty to justify it.

Attitudes greatly shape our identify. One's identity is largely determined by the attitude one holds about people, issues, and objects that matter. Changing attitudes would, therefore, amount to changing one's notion of self and identify

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The relationship between attitudes and behavior

The social psychologist Gordon W. Allport once observed that the concept of attitudes "is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American

social psychology". The reason for this is not difficult to discern. Many investigators have assumed that attitudes occupy a crucial position in our mental makeup and as a result have consequences for the way we act. Viewed from this perspective, attitudes serve as powerful energizers and directors of or behavior-they ready us for certain kinds of action. Hence, to understand our attitudes is to understand our behavior. Indeed, the assumption is frequently made that our attitudes serve as rather accurate predictors of our actions.

To a considerable extent, however, this basic assumption has not been borne out by observation. In fact, many studies have revealed a lack of correspondence or, at best, a low correspondence between verbally expressed attitudes and overt behavior.

The findings of a classic study by Richard T. LaPiere are frequently cited as providing a striking example of such a discrepancy. LaPiere traveled throughout the United States-covering some 10,000 miles altogether-with a Chinese couple. He kept a list of hotels, auto camps, tourist homes, and restaurants where they were served and took notes on how they were treated. Only once were they denied service, and LaPiere judged that their treatment was above average in nearly half of the restaurants they visited. Several months later, he mailed questionnaires to the proprietors of these various establishments asking if members of the Chinese race would be accepted as guests. Approximately 92 percent indicated they would not accept Chinese, which was clearly in contradiction to their actual behavior.

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Critics have faulted LaPiere's study because his presence with the Chinese couple undoubtedly had a biasing effect. Also, it is quite probable that, whereas the Chinese couple dealt with waitresses and desk clerks, the questionnaires were completed by proprietors. Since the time of LaPiere's study, however, a large number of additional studies have also failed to find a consistent relationship between people's attitudes and their behavior.

In one study undertaken in the period immediately prior to the civil rights movement, G. Saenger and E. Gilbert compared the attitudes of White customers buying from Black clerks with the attitudes of White customers buying from White clerks in a large New York department store. Customers were followed out of the store, where they were then interviewed. In both groups 38 percent either disapproved of Black clerks or wanted them excluded from some of the departments in the store. Despite this fact, a number of women who had insisted a short time previously that they would not buy from Blacks later returned to the store and were observed buying from Black clerks. Thus a considerable gap existed between what people said and what they did.

Various researchers have attempted to resolve these matters by suggesting that behavior is a function of at least two attitudes-an attitude toward the object and an attitude toward the situation. Indeed, multiple, diverse, and even contradictory attitude may be activated in given situations

Saenger and Gilbert, for instance, suggest a number of situational factors that might have accounted for the discrepancy between what White people in the study of department-store shoppers said about Black clerks and the way they acted toward them. First, prejudiced individuals were caught in a conflict between two contradictory motivations: their prejudice, on the one hand, and their desire to shop where they found it most comfortable and convenient, on the other. They tended to resolve their dilemma by acting contrary to their prejudice and completing their shopping as quickly as possible. Second, prejudiced individuals were caught in still another conflict: whether to follow the dictates of prejudice or to act in accordance with America's democratic ideals. Third, people prefer to conform with prevailing public opinion; the fact that Blacks were serving as clerk tended to suggest to many Whites that the public approved of their presence (and that, by the same token, the public would disapprove of "racist" acts). Thus because of the intervention of situational factors, there is no simple way in which the behavior of one person toward another can be accurately predicted solely on the basis of knowledge of that person's attitudes toward the other.

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Other factors besides the situational interfere with prediction of behavior on the basis of attitudes alone. For example, Blacks differ from each other in such social properties as age, education, occupation, sex, and marital status; and attitudes toward these properties affect White behavioral interaction with Blacks. And attitudes vary not only in their direction-that is, in being either positive or negative-but also in extremity, intensity, and the extent of the person's ego involvement with the attitudes. Further, attitudes that we form on the basis of our own direct experience predict our actions better than those attitudes we form indirectly through hearsay.

Icek Ajzen and **Martin Fishbein** have proposed a further refinement for conceptualizing the relationship between attitudes and behavior. They say that our attitude toward an object influence our overall pattern of responses to the object. However, our attitude does not predict any specific action toward that object. Ajzen and Fishbein concern themselves with the behavioral intentions underlying our actions. They view our intentions as shaped by three factors: (1) our attitude toward performing the act in question; (2) the beliefs we hold about the like-hood that others expect us to perform the particular act; and (3) our motivation to comply with these beliefs.

Mark Snyder and **Deborah Kendzierski** direct our attention to still another matter. Before we can employ attitudes as guides to action, we first must activate these attitudes. More specifically, we must define certain attitudes as relevant to the action choices that confront us. In other words, we need to link mentally the elements in the situation in which we find ourselves with particular attitudes before we can bring these attitudes into play in guiding our action. For instance, we may have positive attitudes toward affirmative-action programs for minorities. Yet it may not occur to us that the under representation to minorities in our school or profession calls for the implementation to affirmative-action policies in these areas. We fail to see the relevance of the attitudes, for the situation at hand. Consequently, believing does not guarantee doing.

Social psychologists, then, are coming to see the relationship between attitudes and behavior in increasingly complex terms-as involving multiple factors and mediating variables. They no longer ask whether or attitudes can be used to predict our overt actions, but when. In any event, attitudes offer a convenient starting point for examining people's behavior as they enter situation and begin to construct their actions.

ORGANIZATION OF ATTITUDES

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Underlying much social psychological theory and research is the notion of attitude consistency-the idea that people tend to organize their attitudes in a harmonious manner so that their attitudes are not in conflict. Thus civil-rights activists do not ordinarily contribute to the Ku Klux Klan; Christian Scientists do not usually enroll in medical schools; and liberal and radical reformers seldom vote for conservative Republican candidates. The concept of attitude consistency presumes and underscores human rationality. It assumes that people experience inconsistency as a noxious state that they are impelled to eliminate or reduce.

The basic prediction to be derived from the principle of attitudes consistency is that people typically seek to reconcile their conflicting attitudes-that the direction of attitude change will be from a state of inconsistency toward a state of consistency. Assume by way of example that you strongly support abortion laws, believing that a woman should have the right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Indeed, you feel so strongly about the matter that you have recently begun to campaign for proabortion political

candidates and to raise funds to support a local abortion clinic. Also suppose that your best friend vigorously opposes abortion, believing it to be an act of murder. How can you have deep and abiding ties with a person whose opinions about abortion are so different from you own? You may conclude that you really do not feel so strongly about pro-abortion legislation after all; or you may decide that you do no like your friend all that much; or you may attempt to delude yourself into thinking that your friend is not really opposed to abortion. In any event, the chances are that you will changes an attitude so as to bring about consistency.

There are several varieties of consistency theory, three of which we shall review here: balance theory, congruity theory, and cognitive dissonance theory.

BALANCE THEORY

The initial formulation of the principle of attitude consistency came from **Fritz Heider's balance theory of attitudes**. Heider was concerned with three elements in attitude change: (1) the person who was the focus of attention, labeled P; (2) some other person, labeled O; and (3) an impersonal entity-an object, idea, or event-labeled X. His primary interest was an discovering how relations among P, O, and X are organized by the person P.

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CONGRUITY THEORY

The **congruity theory** of attitudes, which is an outgrowth of balance theory, was advanced by Charles E. Osgood and his associates. They recognize that we hold a great many attitudes, some of which are consistent with one another, others inconsistent. Inconsistent attitudes generally do not pose a problem for us unless they are somehow brought together within the same context. Let us assume, for instance, that you told a positive attitude toward a given university professor and also toward the idea of pro-abortion legislation. The two matters remain unrelated unless the professor expresses a position on abortion legislation. Should the professor indicate support for pro-abortion legislation, the two attitude are congruent-that is, in harmony or agreement. If the professor opposes legislation permitting abortion, they are incongruent-out of harmony or agreement.

Thus far congruity theory remains undifferentiated from Hieder's balance theory. Osgood and his associates proceed, however, to develop a scheme in which something is evaluated on a scale that runs from good to bad, or + 3 to –3. On the scale + 3 means

that we have a maximum positive evaluation of something; -3, a maximum negative evaluation of it; and O, a neutral evaluation of it.

The recognition that we do not feel equally strongly or intently about all matters has formed the basis for predictions by Osgood and his colleagues regarding the direction and degree of attitude change. They find that the stronger an attitude, the less likely it is to change when paired or linked with something of opposite strength.

Suppose we like our professor at the highest scale value of + 3 and we learn that she or he opposes legislation permitting abortion, a position we dislike at the relatively moderate level of –1. Osgood would predict that our attitude toward abortion would be more likely to "give" than our attitude toward the professor. Inasmuch as extreme attitudes are more resistant to change than neutral ones, there is a greater shift in the milder attitude.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

There are those who would misteach us that to stick in a rut is consistency- and a virtue, and that to climb out of the rut is inconsistency-and a vice. Mark Twain, Consistency

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Few theories in social psychology have had the impact of Leon Festinger's theory of **cognitive dissonance**. Since its initial formulation in 1957, it has stimulated a vast amount of controversy, research, and theoretical development. And although severely challenged, the theory has overall shown considerable versatility, resilience, and predictive ability. In his theory Festinger replaces the concept of consistency or balance with that of consonance, and inconsistency or imbalance with that of dissonance. As viewed by Festinger, there is "pressure to produce consonant relations among cognitions and to avoid dissonance". A cognition is any bit of knowledge, belief, or opinion that people have about themselves, their behavior, or their environment.

Festinger developed his theory as a tool for interpreting some bizarre rumors that had appeared after an earthquake in India. Included among the rumors were the following: "There will be a severe cyclone in the next few days"; "There will be a severe earthquake arose in an area where people had felt tremors but had not experienced personal injury or destruction of property. This seemed to contradict the prevalent psychological notion that people seek to avoid unpleasant things, such as anxiety and

the prospect of pain. interestingly enough, comparable data revealed that people in an actual disaster setting-an area of death and destruction –did not create rumors predicting further disaster.

The explanation arrived at by Festinger was that the rumors in the undamaged community had derived from cognitive dissonance. The people had a strong and persistent fear reaction to the tremors; yet in the absence of an adequate reason for fear was dissonant-nonfitting, or out of balance. The rumors of impending disaster provided explanation that were consonant with being afraid; the rumors functioned to justify fear and thus to reduce dissonance. The people, then, undertook to reduce dissonance by adding new consonant elements-the fear justifying rumors added new cognitions that were consistent with being afraid.

Still another method for reducing dissonance is to change given cognitions. Here Festinger uses the example of people who believe that cigarette smoking causes cancer and who simultaneously know that they themselves smoke. Such people experience dissonance.

The most efficient way to reduce dissonance would be to stop smoking, but many people find this the most difficult solution. Instead, they undermine the other cognition-that cigarette smoking causes cancer. They may belittle the evidence that links smoking to cancer. Festinger cites a survey which found that 29 percent of nonsmokers, 20 percent of light smokers, but only 7 percent of heavy smokers believed that a relationship had been established between smoking and lung cancer. Or dissonance-experience smokers might switch to filter-tipped cigarettes, deluding themselves that the filter traps all the cancer-producing materials. Or they might convince themselves that cigarette smoking is worth the price- “I’d rather have a short but enjoyable life than a long, un-enjoyable one.” In taking any of these approaches, individuals seek to reduce dissonance by reducing the absurdity involved in making themselves cancer-prone. The boxed insert provides another account of a change in a cognition when the world was not destroyed as the members of a doomsday cult believed it would be. Of interest, alcohol also reduces the unpleasant feelings associated with cognitive conflict, an effect that may reinforce alcohol consumption.

Reward and Dissonance: Pursuing this matter further, dissonance theory makes it prediction that is surprising because it runs counter to common sense thinking: the less the reward for engaging in behavior contrary to an attitude, the greater will be the resultant attitude change. And further, the less the coercion employed to force

commitment, the greater the chance of attitude change. Presumably, the greater the chance of attitude change. Presumably, people who by virtue of a large reward or coercion behave in a way that conflicts with their attitudes can deny responsibility for their behavior by saying, “How could I refuse such a large reward?” or “They made me do it!”

This is illustrated by a classic experiment of **Festinger and J. Merril Carlsmith.** They had subjects perform an exceedingly boring task for two hours. After the subjects had completed the task, most of them were instructed by the experimenter to tell the subjects who replaced them that the experiment had been fun and exciting; others, who served as a control group, were not asked to lie. Some of the subjects who lied were paid $ 1 for their compliance; other received $ 20. The subjects were next referred to the psychology department office, where they evaluated the experiment. The evaluations were actually part of the experiment, although the subjects were led to believe that the experiment was finished.

Among other questions, the students were asked the degree to which they had enjoyed the task they performed. The subjects who were paid $1 rated the task more positively than those paid $20. These findings are in keeping with dissonance theory. The subjects who received only $2 found it necessary to rationalize their falsehood; for a trivial sum they had lied, and hence they undertook to resolve their dissonance by coming to believe that they really had liked the dull task. In contrast, the subjects who received the $20 experienced little dissonance and thus had little reason to alter their unfavorable attitudes toward the boring task.

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Self Concept and Dissonance: Elliot Aronson (1968, 1969), among others, has suggested a still further refinement in dissonance theory. He indicates that Festinger mislocated the source of dissonance. What is critical, he argues, and what Festinger overlooks, is the conflict between people’s self-conceptions and their cognitions about a behavior that violates these self-conceptions. According to this view, dissonance does not arise between just any two cognition; rather, it arises when one’s behavior threatens to diminish the positive feeling one has about oneself.

Aronson argues that in the Festinger-Carlsmith experiment cited above, the dissonance did not occur, as Festinger anr Carlsmith insisted, between the cognition “I believed the task is “dull” and the cognition “I said the task is interesting”. What instead was dissonant, according to Aronson, was the cognition “I am a good and decent human being” and the cognition “I have committed an indecent act; I have misled a person”. Some of his research lends confirmation to this alternative view of dissonance, at least within the settings in which Aronson has studied it.

FACTORS INFLUENCING DISSONANCE:

Commitment and Volition: Research findings have led to various modifications of Festinger's original formulations. One of the most notable of these modifications has been proposed by Jack W. Brehm and A. R. Cohen. They note that the theory holds only under certain conditions. Two key conditions are commitment and volition. Commitment is a state of being bound to or locked into a position or a course of action. It implies that people, by closing the door to alternative behaviors, have to "live with" their decisions. Accordingly, they need to reduce any dissonant elements deriving from their irreversible commitment.

Assume, by way of illustration, that a high school student praises Ivy League schools and ridicules the scholarly attributes of state universities. Later, he finds that no Ivy League school will accept him, and he then decides to enter a state university. By his actions, he how committed himself to a state university. According to dissonance theory, it can be predicted that he will reduce dissonance by bringing by bringing his attitudes into line with his behaviors his attitudes toward state universities will become more favorable, and, possibly, his attitude toward Ivy League schools will become more negative.

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Volition refers to the degree of freedom individuals believe they possess in making a decision or choice. For individual to experience dissonance, they must believe they acted voluntarily so that they feel responsible for the outcome of their decision. If, in contrast, they are compelled to act contrary to their beliefs, they can avoid dissonance by reasoning, "I was forced to do this; I really did not have any choice." If the student in the above illustration felt himself forced to attend the state university, he presumably would experience less dissonance-and thus less pressure to change his attitudes about state university-then if he saw himself making a free choice. Closely associated with the processes of commitment and volition is that of reactance, a matter examined in the boxed insert on the next page.

PERSUASION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

Persuasion is a deliberate attempt on the part of one party to influence the attitudes or behavior of another party so as to achieve some predetermined end. Earlier in chapter communication requires that a sender and a receiver become. "tuned" together for a given message. Consequently, for permission to occur, three elements must be fitted together within some viable arrangement: the communicator, the message, and the target. The communicator sends a message to a target person hoping to evoke a particular response. Of course not all messages succeed in eliciting the desired outcome. Let us consider the communicator, the message, and the target in turn, examining the part each plays in persuasion and attitude change.

[A] The Communicator

Aristotle's observation is in keeping with common sense notions: we are inclined to believe people and be influenced by people whom we judge to be honorable and trustworthy. But what about social psychological research? Do social psychologists find that we take the characteristics of the communicator into account in assessing his or her message to us? Additionally, what characteristics make a communicator more fully and more readily believable? Much research has been directed to these matters.

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Trustworthiness: Marketing agencies seem to share the belief that the character to the communicator has a considerable effect on the persuasiveness of their appeals. Advertisers select consumers whom they feel typify the target audience to present testimonials on their satisfaction with the advertiser's product. Manufacturers often attempt to win the seal of approval from independent product-testing agencies to substantiate their product claims. And politicians running for office commonly solicit the endorsement of prestigious individuals.

Common sense also suggests that untrustworthy communicators are not effective as trustworthy ones. Presumably, if we think the communicators are attempting to advance their own self-interests, we view them as biased-as having ulterior motives-and, therefore, we are less inclined to be influenced by them. Yet research on this matter has produced mixed results. While high-credibility sources often produce more opinion change than low-credibility sources, the high or low credibility of the source has not been found to affect message learning. Neutral sources produce an amount of opinion change halfway between that produced by high-and low-credibility sources, but neutral sources produce more learning of the message content. When people know that the source is trustworthy, they can evaluate the conclusion without paying attention to

the arguments; when people are unable to evaluate the source, they must evaluate the arguments themselves, and consequently are more likely to learn them.

Further, when the communicator is seen as arguing against his or her own best interests the person's influence may be increased. In one study social psychologists found that when a criminal argued in favor of more individual freedom and against greater police powers, he produced little attitude change in his listeners. But when he argued in favor of a stronger police force, he produced considerable attitude change.

Additionally, rapid speech functions are a credibility cue and as such enhances persuasion. Fast speakers are perceived as more knowledgeable and more trustworthy. And a message is perceived as more complex but clearer and easier to understand when presented by a fast speaker.

We should not assume, however, that a high credibility source is always superior to a low credibility sources. Under some circumstances high credibility may be a liability. Some evidence suggests that a low credibility sources induces grater persuasion than a high credibility source when the issue is one toward which we have a positive initial disposition. Presumably, when we encounter a highly credible source articulating a position we favor, we let the individual do all the work. We feel no need to retrieve supporting cognitive responses from our long-term memory. It is otherwise, however, when a low credibility source expounds our position. Under these circumstances we feel mentally compelled to seek arguments that will support the position, in the process strengthening our initial opinion.

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Expertness: Research reveals that experts are more persuasive than nonexperts. Elliot Aronson and his colleagues had students who had negatively evaluated nine stanzas of poetry read the evaluation of someone who praised the poetry. The favorable evaluation read by one group of students was by the distinguished poet T.S. Elliot, the one read by the other group was by Agnes Stearns, "a student at Mississippi State Teachers College". The subjects then reevaluated the poetry. Perhaps it is not surprising that considerably more attitude change occurred among those who read the evaluation by T.S. Elliot, the expert, than among those who read the one by Agnes Stearns, the nonexpert. Overall, studies that have been made of credibility suggest that the expertness or perceived competence of the communicator increases persuasive impact more than trustworthiness does.

Liking: Research reveals that the more we like the source of a persuasive message, the more likely we are to change our belief in accordance with that advocated by the source. This finding is in keeping with the predictions of Heider's balance theory and of Osgood's congruity theory. However, in some studies based on dissonance theory, the opposite relationship has been predicted and at times confirmed. As dissonance theorists explain this outcome, people who listen to a disliked person can find little justification for agreeing with the person. Accordingly, they are likely to have to justify their listening by saying that the message itself was worthy of attention and, hence, to be more influenced.

Similarity: We tend to be influenced more by people who are similar to us than by people who are different. Presumably, If we perceive the communicator as being like ourselves we assume that he or she also shares with us common needs and goals. We conclude that what the source advocates is good for "our kind of people" and align our attitude accordingly. Further, similarity tends to produce liking for a source, and, as noted above, if we like a source, we are inclined to change our attitude to coincide with that advocated by the liked source. The impact is strengthened by an additional factor: liking also enhances our perception that the person is similar to us.

Multiple Sources: Common sense seemingly dictates that multiple sources are more persuasive than one source along. At political conventions, several noteworthy supporters typically nominate a candidate. Television and magazines advertisers frequently expose their audiences to multiple testimonials for their product. And in courtrooms, attorneys commonly present multiple witnesses to verify or dispute a defendant's good character. The social psychologists Stephan G. Harkins and Richard E. Petty find merit in these approaches. Their experiments reveal that people have to "gear up" anew each time they encounter a new speaker. Consequently, increasing the number of sources compels listeners to think more intently about the message. Should each of the communicators present compelling arguments for a position, listeners typically generate more positive thoughts about the position than they do when the same high-quality arguments are provided by a single person. But multiple sources can also boomerang. Should each communicator present weak arguments, listeners find the messages more negative and less persuasive then they do if the same weak arguments are supplied by one source.

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[B] THE MESSAGE

Central to the persuasive process is the message. A communicator wishes to achieve some goal-an attitude or behavior change. To be persuasive, the communicator must put some idea or feeling into a form in which it can be transmitted to the target. Social psychologists have been interested in the factors that contributed to a communication's effectiveness.

Fear appeals:- One of the most interesting and provocative lines of research dealing with message was initiated by the work of Irving Janis and Seymour Feshbach on fear appeals. Three groups of high school students were exposed to different forms of a communication on dental hygiene. The first group received a strong a fear appeal, which emphasized the pain caused by tooth decay and gum disease; the second group received a more moderate appeal; and the third group received an appeal that focused on completely healthy teeth. Eight percent of the students who had been exposed to the fear appeal changed their dental-care practices, compared with 22 percent of those who had received the moderate appeal and 36 percent of those who received the low fear appeal. In sum, as the amount of fear arousing material increased, conformity to recommended actions decreased.

Stimulated by the Janis-Feshbach study, other researchers have investigated the fectiveness of fear appeals in promoting a wide variety of healthy and safety measures giving up smoking, obtaining tetanus injections, using auto seat belts, and so on. In most of these studies the findings have contradicted the Janis-Feshbach results: the higher the fear level of the appeal, the greater the acceptance of the recommendations.

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This contradictory evidence suggests that other factors must be taken into account, especially the circumstances under which fear facilitates or inhibits persuasion. One consideration is that fear produces two parallel but independent reaction. One reaction is the strong emotional response of fear; the other is a readiness to cope with the danger. The arousal of fear in and of itself does not guarantee that people will undertake action to cope with the danger. Instead, they may think up counterarguments to the fear appeal, stop thinking about the danger, or develop various rationalization for not worrying. It appears that high-fear arousing messages result in greater persuasiveness than low-fear-arousing message if the high-fear message contains recommendation for reducing fear-that is, for coping with danger by stopping smoking, getting a tetanus injection, or wearing an auto seat belt. Indeed, the antismoking campaign has paid large dividends. Per capita cigarette consumption in the United States has declined annually since 1973. in the absence of the antismoking campaign, cigarette consumption in 1978 would have exceeded the 1973 level by a third.

Conclusion drawing: Is it more effective when presenting arguments to state the conclusion explicitly or to leave it unstated? Social psychologists have debated this matter. If the conclusion is stated, the possibility that the audience may misinterpret the argument is avoided. On the other hand, by not stating the conclusion, the speaker may give the impression of having no ulterior motive and, therefore, may appear more credible. Further, if the audience members draw the conclusion for themselves, they may be more strongly persuaded than if the conclusion is drawn for them.

On the basis of his survey of the literature, concludes: "In communication, it appears, it is not sufficient to lead the horse to water; one must also push his head underneath to get him to drink". There does appear, however, to be an exception to this general principle. With relatively well-informed, sophisticated audiences or where the issue is a very simple one, it is usually more effective to let the audience draw the conclusion for itself.

One-sided versus two-sided communications: Is it more effective for a speaker to acknowledge the opposing arguments and refute them or simply ignore the opposing view? If the message includes mention of arguments in support of the opposing view, the speaker has the advantage of appearing less biased, more knowledgeable, and les intent on trying to persuade. In brief, the speaker appears more credible, since the message comes across less like propaganda and more like a dispassionate talk. On the other hand, a one-sided communication is less complicated and easier for the hearer to grasp.

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Research findings suggest that whether the one-sided or the two-sided communication is more effective depends partly on the audience. The one-sided communication appears more effective when the audience is poorly informed and poorly educated. To present such an audience with both sides of the issue serves merely to confuse the listeners and to provide them with counterarguments that they would not otherwise consider. One-sided communications appears to be more effective also when the audience already agrees with the message. Then such communication simplify matters and strengthen existing attitudes. But where audience are well informed and well educated or are initially opposed to the message, a two-sided communication appears to be the more effective.

Personal Involvement: **Richard E. Petty** and **John T. Cacioppo** distinguish between central and peripheral routes to persuasion. The central route aims to change people's attitudes by involving them in a diligent consideration of issues and arguments. This approach emphasizes comprehension, learning and retention of the message argument. In contrast, the peripheral route does not necessarily entail issue-relevant thinking.

Instead, attitude change is promoted through "cues" that link the persuader to the issue. These cues are associated with the nature of the communicator; for instance, the communicator is credible, attractive, or powerful. Petty and Cacioppo find that changes that are induced through the central route and that activate personal involvement are more enduring and predictive of subsequent behavior than changes induced through the peripheral route.

[C] THE TARGET

Our daily observations suggest that some people are gullible "pushovers" while others stubbornly "stick to their guns". Do people in fact differ in their susceptibility to persuasive communications? Evidence suggests that there is such a trait as general persuasibility-that there is some consistency in the degree to which a person can be persuaded by certain kinds of appeals and on certain kinds of issues. But although there appears to be an underlying general trait of susceptibility to certain kinds of influences, a host of situational factors nonetheless intervene to moderate the impact of any given appeal. Thus the relationship between personality and persuasibility cannot be determined without taking account of the source and nature of the appeal and the nature of the issue.

The more a person's attitude is "anchored" through linkage and integration with logically related beliefs, the more resistant is the individual to a change in the belief. And the grater the individual's involvement with the issue and stake in the outcome, the greater the person's resistance to persuasion.

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Role Playing: Under some circumstances role playing appears to be an effective device for altering attitudes and behavior. Leon mann and Irving Janis had a sample of young women who were heavy cigarette smokers play the role of a cancer patient in an experimental group. After an eighteen-month interval, these young women smoked significantly less than the women in a control group who had not acted in the play.

Public Position: Making public one's position on an issue and then finding one's position attacked tends to make a person more resistant to counterpropaganda and more dedicated to the cause. In one study, women who favored the dissemination of birth control information and who had signed a petition in support of such a program were sent a leaflet attacking their stand. Follow-up investigation revealed that these women-when compared with a control group who had signed the petition but who did not receive the leaflet-increased their commitment to the cause and were subsequently more willing to do volunteer work on its behalf.

Forewarning people of an upcoming communication that runs counter to their current position increase their resistance to persuasion. Warnings motivate people to consider more fully their own positions and to generate anticipatory counterarguments for the impending attack. A person forewarned is forearmed. However, over time some individuals either forget or dissociate the forewarning, thus permitting the full impact of the message to emerge. Social psychologists term this outcome the sleeper effect-a delay occurs before the impact of a communication is felt.

Voluntary exposure to information tends to be highly selective. We seek out information that supports our beliefs and avoid information that challenges our position. This behavior allows us to minimize dissonance. However, there are exceptions to this principle. For instance, our attention is also affected by the novelty and utility of the information. Additionally, norms of intellectual honesty and fairness can lead us to expose ourselves to information supporting the "other side" despite the dissonance aroused by such material.

People who hold strong opinions on social issues accept information confirming their own views at face value. Moreover, they remember it better than they do opposing information. Hence, individual respond to topics like compensatory education, water fluoridation, and energy conservation with biased mind sets. Indeed, a "rebound effect" often operates-people encountering opposing viewpoints and criticisms of their position not only stick with their original position but claim to be even more convinced than they were previously. Consequently, exposing contending factions in a dispute to an identical body of information may increase rather than decrease their polarization.

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Clearly, the effectiveness of communications that are designed to persuade depends on a good many situational and other factors. As a consequence, overriding generalizations regarding an individual's susceptibility to persuasion are difficult to make.

REACTANCE

In the United States we place a premium upon freedom. For many Americans, freedom is what their country is all about- "the land of the free and the home of the brave." Anything that jeopardizes freedom is seen as a menace to the American way of life-as "un-American." We like to believe that we control our own destinies. We experience anything that lessens our freedom to act as highly unpleasant. Indeed, compelling us to act against our wishes often boomerangs-we become "contrary" and attempt to

reassert our freedom. If we feel prevented from doing something, commonly we will want to do it even more; if forced to do something, we will want to do it even less than we did before.

Jack W. Brehm undertakes to analyze these matters with his theory of reactance. Reactance theory assumes that people view themselves as possessing a set of free behaviors, any one of which they might engage in at any given time. When any of these behavioral, freedoms is eliminated or threatened with elimination, psychological reactance is aroused. Reactance is a motivational state directed toward restoring or safeguarding the threatened freedom. The greater the importance of that freedom. The greater the magnitude of the aroused reactance. Many laboratory studies have shown that when reactance is aroused, people display an increased appreciation of and desire for the threatened or eliminated freedom. Further, reactance leads to an increased tendency to exercise the threatened freedom.

Michael B. Mazis has tested reactance theory in a marketplace situation where consumer's freedom of choice was restricted by government action. Mazis was able to study this kind of situation of Miami, Florida. As an antipollution measure, the county is which Miami is situated prohibited the scale, possession, or use of laundry detergents containing phosphates. Only a small number of popular brands were available in no-phosphate form. Thus shoppers found their choice of detergents drastically reduced.

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Seven to nine weeks after the antiphosphate statute became effective, interviews were conducted among a sample of housewives in a middle-class Miami neighborhood and a similar neighborhood in Tampa, Florida. As predicted by reactance theory, Miami housewives expressed more positive attitudes toward the eliminated alternative than women did in Tampa. Further, the women who were forced to switch brands expressed less favorable attitudes about their no-phosphate detergents than the women who did not have to switch (one leading manufacturer quickly began distributing no-phosphate versions of al its existing brands). This finding is also in accordance with reactance theory, since women who were compelled to switch brands should have experienced more psychological choice deprivation.

Thus reactance theory provides insight into violations of law and opposition to new laws restricting what people believe to be their freedom of action. A classic example is the dismal failure of Prohibition to prevent the manufacture, transportation, and scale of alcoholic beverages in the 1920s. Sometimes anti-pornography and anti-drug laws have also had boomerang consequences.

IMMUNIZATION AGAINST ATTITUDE CHANGE

Following the Korean War, Senate investigator's were alarmed by the lack of resistance to Chinese Communist "brainwashing" that had been displayed by American prisoners of war. A congressional committee concluded that if Americans received more instruction in "Americanism" at home and at school, they would be less vulnerable to enemy propaganda in future wars. Various church groups have adopted a similar stance, calling for stepped-up training of young people in various moral precepts. Research by William McGuire, a psychologists, and his associates suggests, however, that a more effective approach would be to expose people to opposing viewpoints as an immunization device.

When we wish to develop people's biological resistance to disease agents, we inoculate them with a weakened form of the infectious material so as to stimulate their defense mechanisms prior to massive exposure. McGuire suggests that, analogously, individuals can be made immune to propaganda by being exposed to weakened forms of the oppositions arguments before they experience the main attack.

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To test this hypothesis, McGuire had subjects participate in two experimental sessions. During the first session, they were exposed to four cultural truisms regarding various health measures, including frequent tooth brushing to prevent dental decay and the use of X-rays to detect tuberculosis. For example, the subjects were told that "Everyone should brush his teeth after every meal if at all possible.

In the initial session, one of the truisms was accompanied by supportive information-for example, that brushing teeth improves their appearance and eliminates decay-causing bacteria. A second truism was followed by the equivalent of inoculation-weak counterargument and its regulation: some people say that brushing injures the gums, but dental evidence suggests that brushing stimulates and improves gum condition. The counterargument was designed to be strong enough to threaten the individuals slightly and so stir up resistance, but not so strong as to overcome their weak defenses. The other two truisms were control truisms and were neither attacked nor supported.

In another experimental session a few days later, subjects were confronted with a strong attack against three of the truisms-the truism receiving supportive information.

The truism with which inoculation was provided, and one control truism. A follow-up assessment of the subjects of attitudes revealed that the undefended truisms were highly vulnerable to the subsequent attack. In contrast, both supportive defense and inoculation defense helped subjects to resist the counter-attitudinal propaganda. But of most interest is that the inoculation defense conferred considerably more immunity that did the supportive defense. Apparently, as in the case of medical inoculation, people who experience an earlier weak attack bolster their defenses: they prepare arguments to support their position, construct counterarguments, belittle opposing views, and so on.

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MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDE

Social scientists have developed a variety of devices for measuring attitudes. Here we shall briefly consider a number of these scaling measures.

1. TURNSTONE'S SCALES

Louis Thurstone developed what is known as an *equal-appearing intervals method.* He would assemble a fairly large number of clearly formulated statements on an issue, such as attitude toward religion. Next he would have people judge the statements, not in terms of their own attitudes, but with respect to the extent to which the statements were favorable or unfavorable toward a given object-for instance, church. The

statement were assigned numbers on a scale that usually ranged from 1 to 11. with 1 being, extremely favorable and 11 being extremely unfavorable. Thurstone then selected for his actual questionnaire-the questionnaire to be employed in questioning subjects to determine their attitudes-the statement upon which the judges were in close agreement as to their degree of favorability or unfavorability.

The questionnaire would then be administered to a second group of people, the subjects of the study. Each subject would check the statements with which he or she agreed. For instance, the following might be included in an inventory of 45 or so statements.

I believe that membership in a good church increase one's self-respect and usefulness.

I think the church is after money all the time and I am tired of hearing about it.

I don't believe church-going will do anyone any harm.

In the above items, as rated by the initial group of judges, on an eleven-point scale, the first statement has a scale value of 2.7; the second, 9.0, the third, 5.3 (neutral). When the actual subjects of the study would later complete the questionnaire containing these statements, they would receive the scale value score for those questions with which they agreed (if they disagreed with the statement, they were instructed to leave it unmarked). The scale value scores of all the items checked by a subject could then be totaled, giving each subject a summated score.

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2. LIKERT SCALES

Rensis Likert developed an attitude scale referred to as the technique of *summated ratings.* As with the Thurstone technique, a series of statements expressive of a wide range of attitudes from extremely favorable to extremely unfavorable on a particular question are compiled and carefully edited. For each statement, the subject checks or underlines one of five responses, such as strongly approve, approve, undecided, disapprove, strongly disapprove.

For instance:

I believe that membership in a good church increases one's self-respect and usefulness. Definitely agree (5) agree (4) undecided (3) disagree (2) definitely disagree (1)

I think the church is after money all the time and I am tired of hearing about it.

Definitely agree (1) agree (2) undecided (3) disagree (4) definitely disagree (5)

A total score for each subject is obtained by totaling the value of each item that is checked. The weights of 1,2,3,4,5 or 4,3,2,1, denote the degree to which the response is favorable or unfavorable. Note that on this scale the lowest value is assigned to an unfavorable response.

3. Guttman Scales

Louis Guttman developed a method of attitude measurement termed scalogram analysis. Knowing a person's score on a Guttman questionnaire enables us to tell, without having to consult the questionnaire itself, exactly which items he or she endorsed. In its simplest terms, the rationale of a Guttman Scale is this: if an attitude (for instance, that toward the United Nations) falls along an continuum or gradient from favorable to unfavorable, then it should be possible to device items for a questionnaire that tap the sentiment in a step-by-step fashion. As a consequence, the items on the scale have a *cumulative relationship*. An individual necessarily endorses all the items below the highest one he or she checks and none above it. Accordingly, if we know the number of items checked by the individual, we automatically know which items he or she checked.

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By way of illustration, consider the following five items which are arranged in order from the least difficult to accept to the most difficult to accept:

Issue: Women's Right in Employment

- Generally speaking, women should be able to secure any job for which they are qualified.

- Employers should not discriminate against women in favor of men

- The state should actively support the idea of equal job rights for women

- There should be legal review boards that pass on cases of extreme discrimination against women in employment.

- The federal government should pass and enforce legislation guaranteeing equal job rights for women.

- Thus, if a person agrees with the third statement, in most cases he or she would also agree with the first two statements.

4. Semantic Differential Scales

Charles E. Osgood and his associates devised the *semantic differential* to measure the connotative meaning of a concept (a person, a product, a group of people, a song, a political party, a candidate, or anything else). The subject is asked to rate the concept on a series of *seven-point bipolar scales* as in the following format for a political candidate (the subject is asked to check the appropriate blank on the continuum):

Candidate Mary M. Doe

Weak	-	-	-	-	-	Strong
Cautious	-	-	-	-	Rash	
Bad	-	-	-	-	-	Good
Kind	-	-	-	-	-	Cruel
Honest	-	-	-	-	-	Dishonest

The scale provides a method of measuring the similarity or difference between individuals in their concepts of a given object.

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